

People With Disabilities

In the coming years, Washington will face an increasing shortage of skilled workers. People with disabilities have been an underutilized human resource, and, in the past, have been underrepresented in the workforce at large.¹ Part of the solution to this coming shortage should come from preparing people with disabilities for success in the workplace.

Report Highlights

- People with disabilities are less likely to be in the labor force² than those without one—that is, working or looking for work. Additionally, people with disabilities are less likely to be working.
- Whether with disabilities or without, people with more education are more likely to be in the labor force and working.
- People with disabilities in urban areas are more likely than those in rural areas to be in the labor force and to be working, the same for people without.
- Younger people with disabilities, as well as those without, are more likely than their elders to be in the labor force and working.
- People with disabilities are more likely to work part time than people without.
- In general, people with disabilities earn less than people without; however, the size of that difference varies by factors such as industry, occupation, education level, and age.
- Adults with disabilities participate in Workforce Investment Act (WIA) adult programs in percentages similar to their representation in the state's population; they participate in smaller percentages in other programs. Youth with disabilities participate in WIA youth programs in percentages greater than their representation in the state's population.
- People with disabilities are less likely than people without to be working after leaving their workforce development programs.
- People with disabilities who participate in community and technical college (CTC) job preparatory and worker retraining and adult basic skills programs tend to have lower hourly wages than those without; otherwise, the hourly wages are similar.



People With Disabilities in Washington³

Working-age people with disabilities, 20-64 year olds, represent 58 percent of our state's population of people with disabilities, 4 percent less than the number of working-age people without.

Just over 54 percent of working-age people with disabilities have some postsecondary education: 17 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher; 16 percent have an associate's degree or vocational certificate; 21 percent have some college, but no degree; and 46 percent have a high school diploma or less. Contrast this with people without disabilities: 38 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher; 14 percent have an associate's degree or vocational certificate; 18 percent have some college, but no degree; and 30 percent have a high school diploma or less.

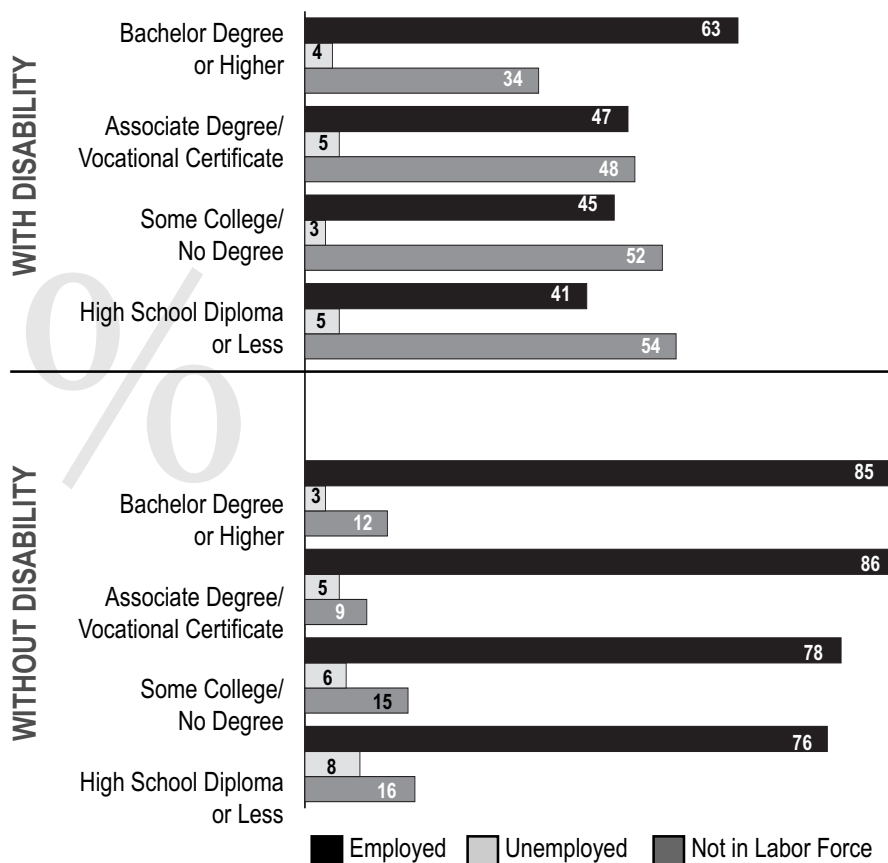
Just over 10 percent of working-age people with disabilities are in school, either full time (6 percent) or part time (4 percent), while 12 percent of working age people without are in school: 8 percent full time and 4 percent part time. Of those in school, a smaller percentage of people with disabilities (68 percent) than people without (77 percent) are also in the labor force.

Only 51 percent of people with disabilities are in the labor force compared with 87 percent of people without. Of those in the labor force, 92 percent of people with disabilities and 94 percent of people without are working.

The more education people with disabilities have, the more likely they are to be in the labor force and working. The trends are similar for people without. See Figure 1.

People with disabilities in urban areas are more likely to be in the labor force than those in rural areas: 53 percent and 46 percent, respectively.⁴ Further, of people with disabilities, 93 percent in urban areas and 90 percent in rural areas are working. People without disabilities in urban areas are also more likely than those in rural areas to be in the labor force: 87 percent and 85 percent, respectively. For people without disabilities, 94 percent in urban areas and 93 percent in rural areas are working.

FIGURE 1
Labor Force Status by Level of Education: Ages 20-64, Not Enrolled in School



Young people with disabilities are more likely to be in the labor force than their elders: 56 percent of those 20-34 years old, 52 percent of those 35-49 years old, and 47 percent of those 50-64 years old. However, older people with disabilities are more likely to be working: 95 percent of those 50-64, 91 percent of those 35-49, and 87 percent of those 20-34. Compare this to people without disabilities: 88 percent of those 20-34, 90 percent of those 35-49, and 80 percent of those 50-64 are

in the labor force. Like those with disabilities, older people without one are more likely to be working: 96 percent of those 50-64, 94 percent of those 35-49, and 91 percent of those 20-34.

If all working hours are combined, 79 percent of people with disabilities and 85 percent of those without work full time (35 hours or more per week).

Nearly 11 percent of working people with disabilities and 9 percent of people without hold more than one job. Of those with more than one job, most hold two.

People with disabilities tend to work predominantly in the private sector: 63 percent work for a private company, 20 percent work in the government sector, 10 percent are self-employed, 6 percent work for a nonprofit organization, and 2 percent work for a family business. This differs only slightly from people without disabilities where 59 percent work for a private company, 22 percent work in the government sector, 10 percent are self-employed, 8 percent work for a nonprofit organization, and 2 percent work in a family business.

The services industries employ the most people, whether or not they have disabilities. See Figure 2.

People with disabilities tend to work in construction, maintenance, production, and transportation occupations, while those without (36 percent) work in business and professional occupations. See Figure 2.

FIGURE 2

Employment in Non-Government Sector: Ages 20-64, Not in School

By Industry

	WITH DISABILITY	WITHOUT DISABILITY
Services	44	45
Manufacturing	14	11
Wholesale & Retail Trade	12	9
Transportation, Communication, Utilities	10	14
Construction & Mining	10	10
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	6	9
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	4	3

By Occupation

	WITH DISABILITY	WITHOUT DISABILITY
Construction, Maintenance, Production, Transportation	30	22
Business & Professional	22	36
Sales & Admin. Support	21	22
Service	19	12
Management	5	6
Farming, Fishing, Forestry	2	1
Military-Specific	1	0

In general, people with disabilities earn less than people without. The median hourly wage for people with disabilities in their primary job is \$14.81, compared to \$19.23 for those who do not. On an hourly basis, people with disabilities earn about 77 percent of what people without earn. The wage differences vary depending on the industry and occupation of employment. See Figure 3.⁵

People with disabilities who have a bachelor's degree or higher, or some college but no degree, earn the highest median hourly wages—\$17.63 and \$17.50, respectively. However, with one exception, people with disabilities tend to earn less on an hourly basis than people without. See Figure 4.

FIGURE 3
Hourly Wages of Employment
(median based on main job)

By Industry

	WITH DISABILITY	WITHOUT DISABILITY
Transportation, Communication, Utilities	21.43	23.50
Manufacturing	17.00	20.56
Construction & Mining	16.64	20.64
Services	12.98	17.00
Wholesale & Retail Trade	10.50	16.83

By Occupation

	WITH DISABILITY	WITHOUT DISABILITY
Business & Professional	18.46	24.04
Construction, Maintenance, Production, Transportation	16.64	18.46
Sales & Admin. Support	12.82	15.38
Service	10.25	12.94

FIGURE 4
Hourly Wages by Level of Education
(median based on main job)

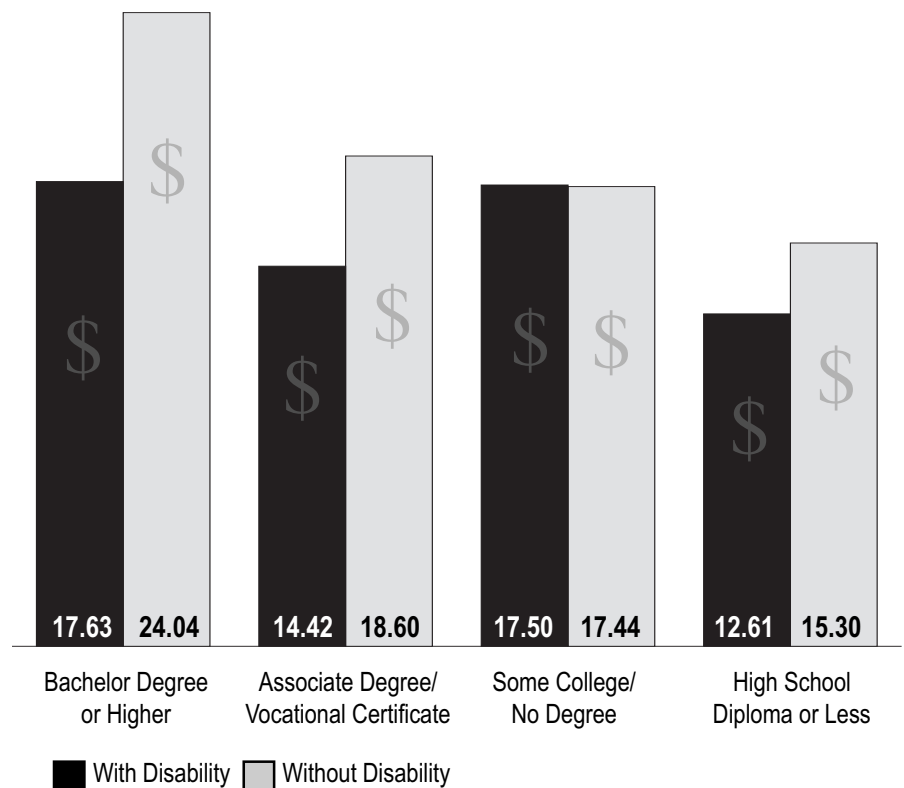
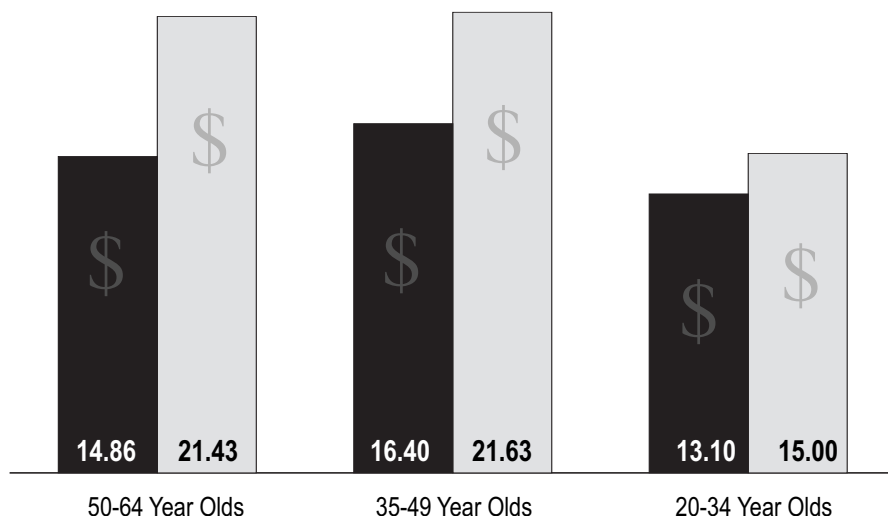


FIGURE 5
Hourly Wages by Age Group
(median based on main job)

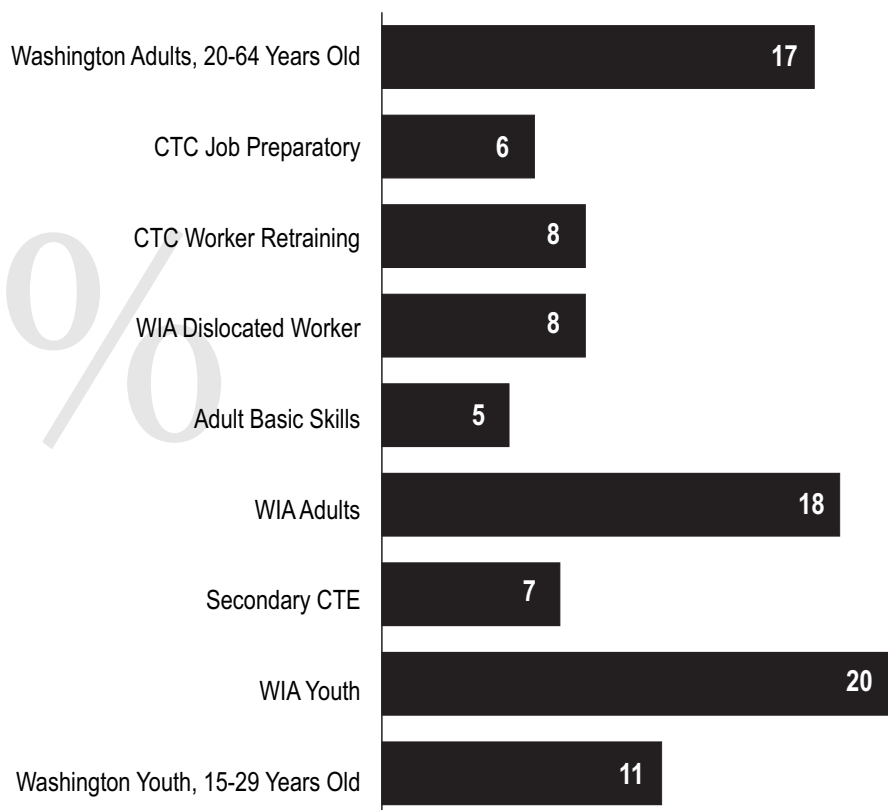


People with disabilities earn the most between the ages of 35-49. See Figure 5.

People With Disabilities in Washington's Workforce Development Programs⁶

The percentage of people with disabilities in workforce development programs varies—most highly represented in WIA youth and adult programs.⁷ See Figure 6.

FIGURE 6
People With Disabilities in Workforce Development Programs



Fewer people with disabilities are working after leaving their programs than those without. See Figure 7.

People with disabilities who participate in CTC job preparatory and worker retraining and adult basic skills programs tend to have substantially lower hourly wages than participants without. Annual earnings show somewhat similar trends. See Figure 8.

FIGURE 7
Employment Rates of People With Disabilities and Without After Workforce Development Programs
(employed during the third quarter after leaving the program)

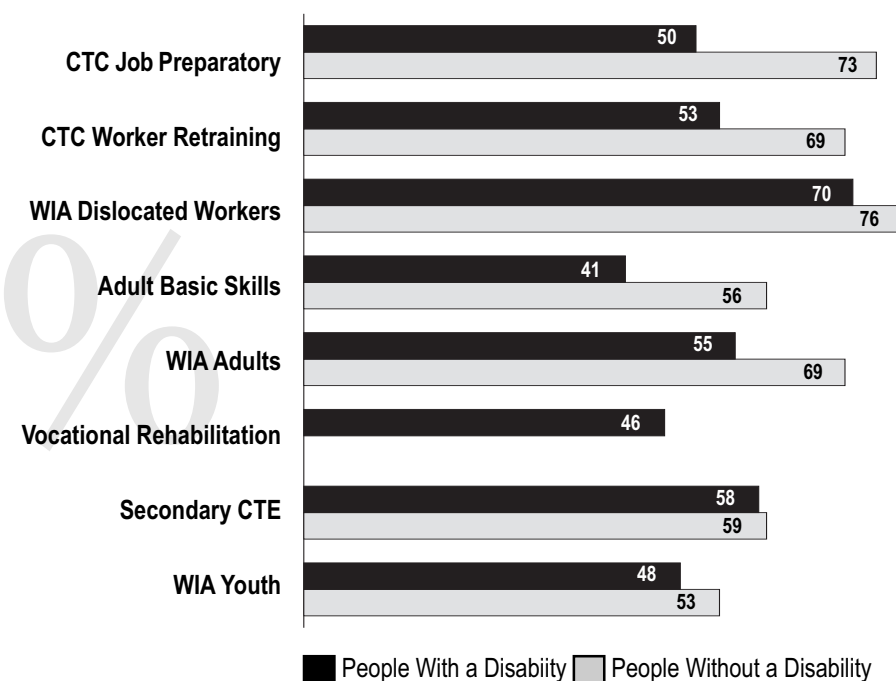


FIGURE 8
Earnings of People With Disabilities and Without After Workforce Development Programs
(median based on the third quarter after leaving the program)

Hourly

	WITH DISABILITY	WITHOUT DISABILITY
CTC Job Preparatory	10.65	12.58
CTC Worker Retraining	11.28	12.87
WIA Dislocated Workers	13.60	13.86
Adult Basic Skills	8.30	9.25
WIA Adults	10.13	10.44
Vocational Rehabilitation	9.91	n/a
Secondary CTE	8.29	8.25
WIA Youth	7.82	7.98

Annually

	WITH DISABILITY	WITHOUT DISABILITY
CTC Job Preparatory	16,233	21,695
CTC Worker Retraining	17,459	21,997
WIA Dislocated Workers	24,791	26,420
Adult Basic Skills	9,457	15,345
WIA Adults	15,821	17,181
Vocational Rehabilitation	12,502	n/a
Secondary CTE	10,324	10,357
WIA Youth	6,902	8,572

End Notes

¹The identification of people with disabilities is based on self-reports, with the exception of individuals who participated in the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation programs.

²In this paper, the term “labor force” refers to those who are currently working (either full-time or part-time) or who are actively looking for work. It is further defined as civilian noninstitutional and therefore excludes those who live in nursing homes, prison, or military barracks.

³The information on working-age people with disabilities in Washington is based on data from the 2004 State Population Survey (SPS). The SPS asks a series of six questions; answering positively to one identifies a person as an individual with disabilities. The SPS asks if the individual has a physical, mental; or emotional condition lasting six months or more that makes it difficult to perform certain activities. The four activity activities are: (a) learning, remembering, or concentrating (mental disability); (b) dressing, bathing, or getting around inside the home (self-care disability); (c) going outside the home alone to shop or visit a doctor’s office (going outside the home disability); and (d) working at a job or business (employment disability). They also ask two additional questions about having a long lasting condition: (i) blindness, deafness, or a severe vision or hearing condition; and (ii) condition that limits activities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, or carrying.

Unless otherwise indicated, all of the employment and education information references a point in time—spring 2004. Further, the employment and earnings data are based on those who are ages 20-64 and who indicated they were not in school at the time of the survey.

⁴Urban and rural areas are defined using the SPS regions. The urban areas include the following regions: King County, Other Puget Metro, Clark County, and Spokane County. The rural areas include the following regions: North Sound, West Balance, Yakima-Tri Cities, and East Balance.

⁵The samples sizes for people with disabilities in industries and occupations not included in the figures are too small on which to base reliable wage estimates.

⁶Based on participants exiting programs between July 1, 2001 and June 30, 2002. For data sources, methodology, and program descriptions see *Workforce Training Results 2004* from the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. We caution against making comparisons among the programs or with the state’s population-at-large: the populations served, the types of services provided, and lengths of training vary substantially from program to program.

⁷Data on people in the state with disabilities ages 15-19 and 20-64 are from Washington’s Office of Financial Management’s 2004 State Population Survey.

Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

Our Vision

Washington's Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board is an active and effective partnership of labor, business, and government leaders guiding the best workforce development system in the world.

Our Mission

We shape strategies to create and sustain a high-skill, high-wage economy.

To fulfill this Mission, the Board will:

- Advise the Governor, Legislature, and other policymakers on workforce development policy and innovative practice.
- Promote a seamless workforce development system that anticipates and meets the lifelong learning and employment needs of our current and future workforce.
- Advocate for the training and education needed for success in the 75–80 percent of jobs that do not require a baccalaureate degree.
- Ensure quality and accountability by evaluating results, and supporting high standards and continuous improvement.

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